

**Opening Statement
Chairman Mark Souder**

“National Parks of Hawaii”

**Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy,
and Human Resources
Committee on Government Reform**

December 1, 2005

Good morning, and thank you for joining us today. This is the sixth in a series of hearings focusing on the critical issues facing the National Park Service. I would like to welcome the Members of Congress who have joined us today, and who care deeply about the National Parks.

This hearing will focus on the Parks of Hawaii. Millions of Americans have been captivated, either in person or on television, by the nearly continuous eruptions of Hawaii’s volcanoes. The unparalleled sight active volcanoes are a unique part of the National Park Service.

Also unique among National Park Service units is that of the USS Arizona Memorial. This site, a memorial to those who lost their lives on a quiet Sunday morning nearly 64 years ago, holds a special place in the hearts and minds of Americans.

The National Park Service is facing many challenges and problems. Management and funding are of constant concern to all park units. Underneath these issues are problems special to each park unit. In Hawaii, visitor services are of particular concern. The popularity of Hawaii’s parks and the number of people wishing to visit them, pose many difficulties. The USS Arizona Memorial’s location, in the middle of Pearl Harbor, places special demands on the NPS – how does the Park Service transport so many people out to the Memorial, and how can this be improved.

Moreover, the tendency of lava to move and flow where it wants creates a problem because people want to visit the lava. Moving visitor’s centers closer to lava or losing centers to lava flows is certainly costly and hard to manage.

Also of concern to the National Park Service is the cost involved with invasive species. A problem throughout the United States and throughout park service units in every region of the country, Hawaii may be one of the best examples of this problem. The enormous task of combating this problem undoubtedly impacts management and funding considerations on many levels.

I would like to welcome Congressman Neil Abercrombie and Ed Case to this hearing. Although not a Members of the Committee, I welcome them to join the panel for this hearing. Both gentlemen are strong advocates for Hawaii and for the National Parks.

On our first panel I would like to welcome Frank Hays the Pacific Area Director of the National Park Service. He will be joined during the question time by Geri Bell the Superintendent of Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park, Marilyn Parris the Superintendent of Haleakala National Park, and Cindy Orlando the Superintendent of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

Our second panel will be Theodore Jackson the Deputy Director for Park Operations of the California State Parks, Gene Sykes representing the National Parks Conservation Association, Greg Moore of the Golden Gate Conservancy, and Daphne Kwok of the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation. Welcome to all of you.